

Castleford Academy

Ferrybridge Road, Castleford, West Yorkshire, WF10 4JQ

Inspection dates

25–26 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students' achievement is good. Most students throughout the academy made good progress and their achievement in English is good. However students' progress and attainment is weaker in mathematics.
- Students are keen to learn and their attendance is above average. They are tolerant of and show respect for each other and especially towards those students with a hearing impairment.
- The sixth form, although small, is good and the courses offered meet the needs of the students. Teaching is good and this enables students to reach their individual goals.
- In many lessons students are provided with imaginative, stimulating and challenging activities which meets their needs appropriately. Working with their peers, engaging in constructive debate secures students' progress and develops their understanding and skills within different subjects.
- The Principal and members of the governing body are ambitious and use performance management effectively to challenge staff and improve the quality of teaching. Challenging targets are set. Strong support and guidance are provided so they may be achieved.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students' attainment and progress in mathematics is not at the same level as that in English. This is because the changes to the quality of provision and teaching within the department are not firmly established.
- There is insufficient outstanding teaching to promote high quality learning. In addition, developing students' use of key skills in different subjects is underdeveloped

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors spent the majority of their time observing 40 lessons, three of which were observed jointly with members of the senior team, taught by teachers from all key stages.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, members of the senior team, middle leaders and teachers with no leadership or management responsibilities, and the Chair and vice-chair of the governing body. Groups of students were spoken to formally and during social times.
- Inspectors scrutinised students' work, read documents presented to them, including those relating to students' progress, self-evaluation, improvement planning, the curriculum and safeguarding.
- Due consideration was given to the 48 questionnaires returned from staff and the 48 responses from parents on the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Other parents requested to speak to inspectors and they were contacted by telephone.

Inspection team

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Additional Inspector

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Full report

Information about this academy

- This academy converted to its current status in April 2011 and is larger than the average sized secondary school.
- The Principal took up his post in September 2012.
- Within the academy, but funded by the local authority, is a unit for students with a hearing impairment. These students are educated partly within the unit and partly within the academy.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- One in five students are known to be eligible for the pupil premium.
- There are links for students in the sixth form with Ossett Academy in order to provide some courses.
- Twenty eight students receive part of their education off-site at a number of different providers in the local area which include Wakefield College, Castleford Fire Station, Elite Training and the Lighthouse Group.
- The academy has met the government's current floor standard, which sets out the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sustain and improve the gains made in mathematics for all groups of students.
- Embed the development of numeracy throughout the curriculum to match the improvements being made in literacy by guaranteeing that all subject areas understand how to contribute and ensure that it happens in lessons.
- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching by including approaches to learning which fascinate, engage and appropriately challenge all groups of students.
- Ensure that all opportunities are taken, particularly in lessons, to develop students' awareness and understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students enter the academy with levels of attainment which are below those expected for their age. Attainment at the end of Year 11 is rising not only in English and mathematics but also in other subjects and across year groups. This is enabling the gaps between the attainment of different groups of students to close.
- Between Years 7 and Year 11 students, including those supported by the pupil premium and those who are disabled or have special educational needs, make good progress in most subjects. Students who have a hearing impairment receive effective support which allows them to make the same progress as their peers.
- Students who receive part of their education off-site, studying mainly vocational courses, achieve well and make good progress. However, they do less well in English and mathematics compared to others.
- A small cohort of sixth form students has completed one course. Students make good progress due to good teaching and effective day-to-day support which ensures that their needs are met appropriately.
- The progress students make in English is better than the progress they make in mathematics. This is because the teaching over-time has been better in English than in mathematics with students engaged in learning and benefiting from stimulating activities which are well matched to their individual needs.
- The coordinated provision of various programmes to improve the students' literacy levels, including a reading programme for students in Years 7 to 9, are also contributing to the better progress made by students in English. The reading programme is also encouraging students to read more widely.
- The very large majority of parents who used Parent View agree that their children make good progress.
- The progress students make in mathematics has improved recently due to improvements in the quality of teaching and effective intervention by leaders and managers, including governors. Inspectors saw that students are becoming more adept at using their mathematical skills and knowledge in their lessons so that they are more able to solve problems, describe their work and understand mathematical concepts. However, there are still gaps in students' abilities which are restricting their progress.
- Despite some improvements seen in mathematics lessons, developing students' numeracy skills in all curriculum areas is not yet developed and firmly established in each subject area.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Good day-to-day teaching, combined with effective and well considered intervention strategies, have ensured that, overall, students make good progress and have positive working relationships with their peers and adults in the classroom. Learning support assistants, especially those who support students with a hearing impairment, make a positive contribution to lessons.
- All teachers use a common planning format which reminds staff of the need to check the progress being made in lessons and whether students have understood what they are learning. Inspectors saw examples of teachers using these 'pause points' skilfully, so progress and learning were checked by both the class teacher and particularly, by the students themselves. This system enabled learning in the very best lessons to be re-focused or additional time spent with some students, or the whole class, before moving on.
- Despite this consistent approach to the shape and planning of lessons, occasionally the timing of each section dictates the amount of time to be spent on each activity. Therefore, learning is not finely tailored to every students' individual needs as it should be and when lessons proceed

at the stated pace, students' understanding and progress can suffer.

- Examples of good questioning were seen in lessons and students' attention is maintained well because they are expected to help each other through group discussion and by marking each other's work so that they can develop and share ideas. This approach to learning also enables students to know what they have done well and how they can improve their work. Many of these stronger characteristics were seen in English lessons especially.
- A large majority of parents who used Parent View were exceptionally positive about the quality of teaching. However, about one-fifth were unsure about the amount of homework set for their children. Inspectors found that homework is often set spasmodically.
- There is some teaching that requires improvement. In these lessons, students' attention wandered and they became passive participants allowing, for example, their teachers to answer questions for them. In addition, students tended to complete the same work which meant their individual needs were not always met. The review of a finished task, which sometimes did not challenge or enthuse them, was not used well enough by teachers to consider what students had learnt.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Despite some areas of the academy being crowded at certain times of the day, students are generally polite and courteous to each other and other adults. These positive attitudes, and opportunities to work together in lessons, contribute well to students' progress and ability to value others' opinions.
- Bullying, racial intolerance and lack of understanding of others' disabilities are exceptionally rare. When it does occur it is dealt with swiftly and effectively. This approach is recognised and understood by students. A small minority of parents who used Parent View had less confidence in the way it is dealt with by academy leaders, compared to their unanimously positive response to the question as to whether their child is looked after well.
- Leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, monitor behaviour rigorously. Any slight misdemeanour is noted and inappropriate patterns of behaviour are thoroughly investigated. This approach engenders confidence among students that issues are quickly resolved. Students are very aware of how to keep themselves safe, both in the real world and in the virtual world.
- Attendance is above average and students are punctual to school and to lessons. Exclusions have been recognised as a cause for concern. A new system has been introduced this term whereby students are excluded from lessons to a base within the school. However, it is too soon to judge the impact of this.
- Students know that there are different groups within society and of the need for respect and tolerance. However, missed opportunities to reflect, develop and expand their knowledge further, restrict their awareness of this aspect.

The leadership and management are good

- The new Principal provides clear and effective leadership. He is well supported by an ambitious, and determined, senior leadership team and members of the governing body. Together they are well focused on continually improving the academy and providing a high quality education for all students. This commitment is reflected at all levels of management across the whole academy and has secured the support of parents and carers who responded to Parent View.
- A pragmatic approach is developed successfully when considering and implementing improvement strategies. Consequently, consideration is given when something new is introduced to ensure it has a positive impact on students' progress. The improvements within

the mathematics department are testament to this approach.

- Self-evaluation is accurate and used well by leaders to define priorities in strategic planning. Performance management of teachers is rigorous and is used appropriately to support teacher development and inform salary progression. Staff at the academy feel valued and supported, and are able to make good use of their existing skills and expertise.
 - The quality of teaching is monitored regularly with well considered developmental feedback provided. Staff training is an important feature of the academy's improvement plans; the work of the teaching and learning group is highly valued by those involved. The Teachers' Standards are being used effectively to create bespoke and flexible professional development programmes that are having a direct impact on improving the quality of teaching.
 - The curriculum is reviewed and refined regularly. The off-site provision is meeting the needs of those students who might not always be engaged in learning. Consequently, the proportion of students who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) has reduced. Partnerships with other providers, for example, with primary schools to support the transition between primary and secondary education and to provide a common approach to the teaching of basic skills, have been developed successfully. Strong links have also been forged with Ossett Academy to support the subjects taught in the sixth-form. The curriculum is enriched and complimented by a wide range of additional activities that deepen and broaden students' experience and contribute to their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Nevertheless, opportunities are missed to develop these aspects within some lessons.
 - The academy has retained the services of a school improvement partner and appreciates the support and advice provided by him and from the local authority link officer.
 - The academy meets current government requirements for safeguarding the students.
 - **The governance of the school is good:**
 - members of the governing body have a clear, strategic oversight of the provision and outcomes within the academy. They are well informed about staff performance and provide an appropriate level of challenge and support, to senior leaders in particular. They ask searching questions and are highly committed to seeing the academy improve further.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupil's needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupil's needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	136633
Inspection number	395672

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1221
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr W Clift MBE JP MEd
Principal	Mr S White
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
Telephone number	01977 605060
Fax number	01977 506070
Email address	admin@cashigh.com

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